

Step aside LSIS, there's a new guild in town

Eleanor Radford
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The future of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is in doubt with plans for its role to be taken up by the FE Guild, *FE Week* can exclusively reveal.

A spokesperson for LSIS said the "transition" should be completed by the end of July next year. It is understood the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) wants the guild up and running the following month.

Last month, FE Minister Matthew Hancock announced that the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) had won government approval to "take forward" proposals for the guild – a single body to set professional standards and codes of behaviour, as well as develop qualifications.

BIS is providing the AoC, as the lead body for the guild proposals, with £360,000 of funding until March.

In a letter seen by *FE Week*, Susan Pember, director of FE and skills investment at BIS, told LSIS chair Dame Ruth Silver: "The new guild organisation will assume responsibility for many of the broad areas of activity currently undertaken by LSIS, albeit probably in a different form."

"This clearly calls into question the future of LSIS as a separate entity and has major implications for its current staff."

The LSIS spokesperson said: "Funding has now been agreed for the partnership to develop its plans and clarify how the guild will work and the scope of its activities."

"It is anticipated there will be

consultation about the guild with the sector in the new year, which will clarify the implications for LSIS, with the aim of implementation of the transition by August 2013."

LSIS was formed in October 2008 after a merger between the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and the Quality Improvement Agency.

A spokesperson for AELP and AoC said: "We have been charged with working with partners to establish an FE Guild. That process will begin with a comprehensive consultation of the sector to define the role of the guild. The results of that consultation will inform implications for other sector bodies."

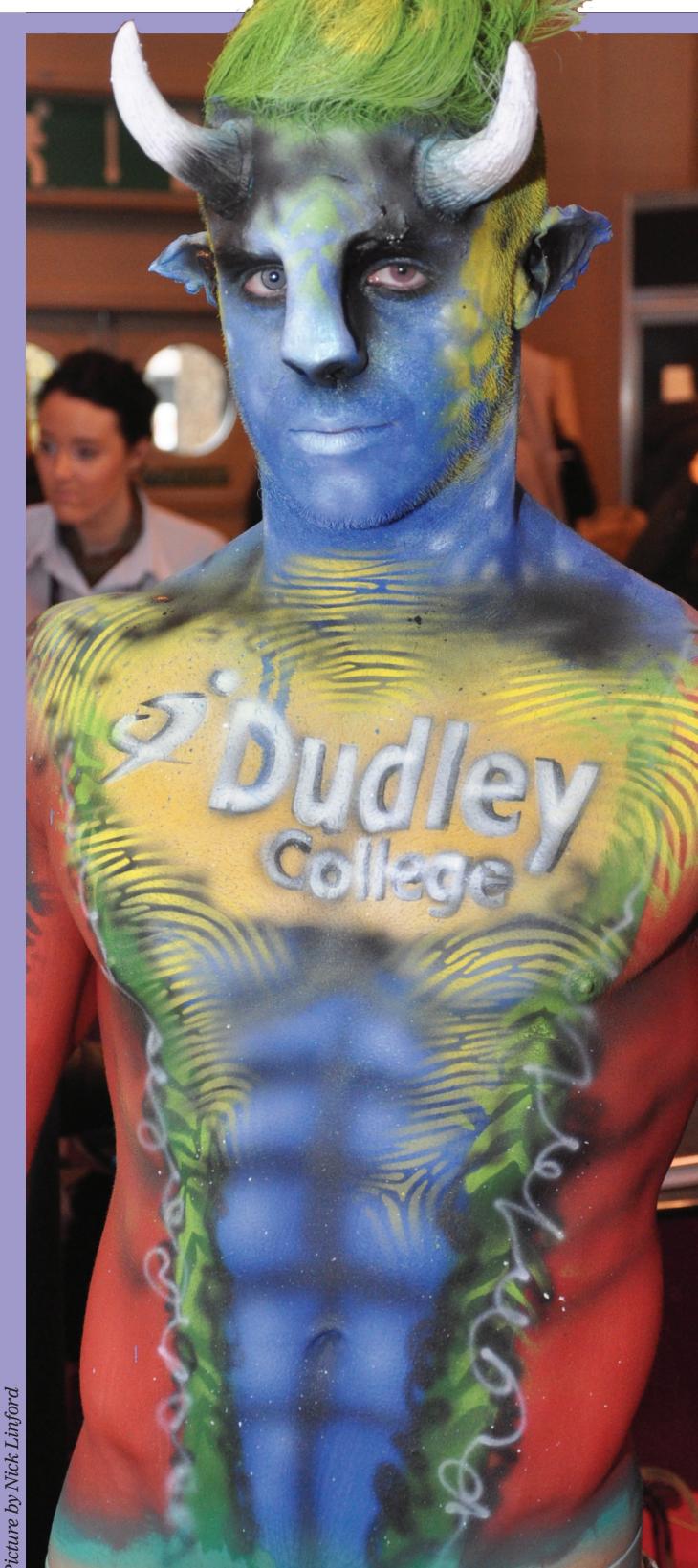
It would then be up to the sector to decide on the "best" employer-led contribution the guild could make to the "continued improvement of teaching, learning and governance".

Ms Pember's letter is the latest in a series of blows for LSIS staff. It was tasked with supporting and improving achievement in the FE and skills sector in England but has faced year-on-year government cuts.

In 2009, Dame Ruth announced that due to "severe funding pressures" it should be led by someone from the sector "steeped in current professional practice". The then chief executive, Roger McClure, immediately stepped down.

Two years ago its budget was slashed from £145m to £65m. More cuts followed in June last year when it was announced that 30 per cent of the organisation's core staff would lose their jobs.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, was this month appointed as chair of a steering group for the new guild.



Hell of a Skills Show

See inside for more

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www.feweek.co.uk

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Fashion show just starting at #skillsshow great to see colleges working together @BSDOfficial

 @iamwillbest
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Great to be at the #SkillsShow Birmingham. Great showcase for colleges, jam packed too!

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New ofsted regime returns good news

Chris Henwood
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The first general FE college inspection carried out under a new common inspection framework (CIF) has returned a good grading, while positives also emerged from the first re-inspection.

Ofsted inspectors armed with the new CIF gave City College Plymouth two days' notice for an inspection between October 1 and 5.

They judged the 17,000-learner college to have improved from the satisfactory grade it got in September 2008.

Principal Phil Davies said it was "fantastic" news for the college and for Plymouth. "The college provides education and training for a large proportion of the local population, and we work closely with local businesses to ensure that local people have the skills they need. We have publicly stated our intention to significantly contribute to the social and economic regeneration of Plymouth," he said.

He believed the college was bucking national trends. "In the last year the majority of inspected colleges saw their grades fall," he said.

Despite minimal notice and a new inspection framework, City College Plymouth has



moved from satisfactory to good, with outstanding features. We have come a long way in a short space of time."

But he said that it would not rest on its laurels. "Ofsted has given us food for thought. We know we have a very good and solid foundation on which to build as we continue on our journey to outstanding," said Mr. Davies.

The new CIF was introduced from September following the inspection body's Good Education For All consultation that ended in May.

It includes a reduced inspection notice period from three weeks to two days, with a re-inspection of providers 'requiring improvement' usually following within 12 to 18 months. Providers awarded the grade twice in a row can be judged inadequate on their third inspection if they haven't improved.

Lambeth College, which got an inadequate grading when it was inspected under the old CIF in February, was said to be enjoying reasonable progress in the five areas that it was re-inspected on.

The 13,500-learner college had also seen significant progress in a sixth and final area reviewed by inspectors early last month.

Principal and chief executive Mark Silverman said: "We found the new CIF to be good — it is easier and very straightforward, the emphasis is where it should be, on teaching and learning.

"We were prepared as we have been working with the new CIF since June so knew what to expect. The two days' notice was not an issue as all the relevant evidence was readily available through our own monitoring and quality systems.

"We were very pleased to receive a positive Ofsted monitoring report. We were able to demonstrate that the focus on change and improvement over the past few months is having a rapid impact.

"This is the first step to ensuring an outstanding Lambeth College."

City College Plymouth's deputy principal, Nicola Cove, gives an account of inspection under the new CIF on page 6.

January exams at centre of row with watchdog

Eleanor Radford
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Plans to scrap staggered A-level exams and limit resit opportunities have been branded "overzealous changes" that could "thwart" learning.

The Institute for Learning (IfL) hit out after exam watchdog Ofqual announced that from September next year students in England would no longer be able to sit papers in January, and from 2014 candidates would get just one resit per paper.

Toni Fazaeli, IfL chief executive, said it expressed "deep concern" the changes would have "equality implications", when they were consulted by the exam regulator.

"Learners who miss periods of education through illness, disability, caring for a family member or other unfortunate events should not have their life chances diminished," she said.

"We believe that teaching practitioners should have the professional freedom to make judgements about the appropriate times for their students — including the most able and those who need extra support — to be assessed."

Ofqual made the announcements after publishing the results of a consultation on the subject.

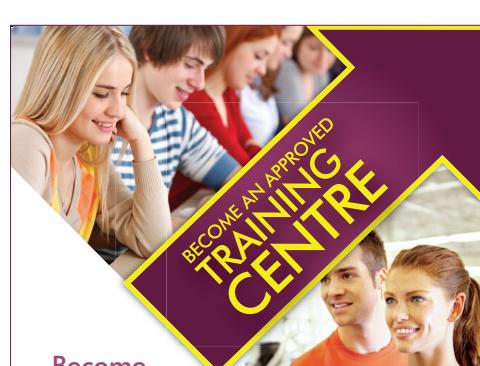
The government said it believed there were "serious problems" with current exams, that they did not prepare pupils properly for university and that the fact they were taken "in chunks" over two years, with resits, had led to "grade inflation".

It favoured instead exams being taken at the end of two years of study and wanted more input from universities. There were also concerns that an emphasis on frequent exams meant students could not study a subject in enough depth.

But Mrs Fazaeli said that for those taking A-levels as a route to employment or higher-level apprenticeships, for example in accountancy, the heavy emphasis on progression to full-time higher education was "not the whole picture".

"We expressed our deep concern about the equality implications of these proposals not having been assessed properly, and that they could have a disproportionate negative impact on learners," she said.

"Teachers and trainers in FE...should not be thwarted by overzealous changes to exam rules."



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Bosses to get place at heart of Richard Review

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

Employers are set to figure at the heart of a much-awaited review of apprenticeships, FE Week can exclusively reveal.

Former Dragons' Den star Doug Richard (pictured right), whose independent review is expected to be published by the end of the month, said he wanted to see "much more employer involvement" on apprenticeships.

"I've been doing everything I can, using as many different devices and activities to encourage, incentivise, drive and hope for, much more employer involvement because apprenticeships more than anything else are partly a job, which by definition means you need an employer in the mix," he told *FE Week* at the launch of the Entrepreneurs and Education Programme at Lewisham College incorporating Southwark College on Monday, November 12.

"This is what's unique about apprenticeships, therefore employer involvement on many levels is simply more important than in other things we do. I've put a lot of effort into increasing the type, the calibre and the depth of employer involvement and that's a clear

message of the review."

Mr Richard was joined at Lewisham College's Waterloo Campus for the programme launch by Michael Fallon MP, Minister for Business and Enterprise.

The Entrepreneurs and Education Programme is being funded by £1.1m of cash from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills over three years to provide support and advice to students, teachers and researchers across 100 colleges and universities.

Mr Fallon said: "Entrepreneurship is coming back into colleges. We've had enterprise societies across universities colleges and the further education sector. It can be taught by example. By getting entrepreneurs to come in to colleges, getting businesses into colleges and businesspeople to talk about how rewarding it can be to set up a business and start employing other people."

The programme, supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, aims to create a new generation of educational entrepreneurs by equipping colleges and universities across the country with the tools to survive a competitive marketplace.

There were seminars throughout the day, from 9am, with students and staff listening to



Picture by Shane Mann

Mr Richard's views and advice on business.

"Entrepreneurship can be taught," he said. "And it's not so much that's it's lacking in FE, it's just that we don't have the structures and the systems to promote it to flourish to the degree we want."

"This is broadly in the context of FE colleges, specifically in the context of vocational education and very much in the case of apprenticeships, which I intend to change."

Read *FE Week* online for more from Mr Richard.

Colleges code revamp wins Lady Sharp approval

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

A revised guide on government measures to help colleges run courses in response to local employment and skills needs has won the approval of Lady Sharp.

It comes just over a month after she accused the Skills Funding Agency of misinterpreting her suggestions for the Innovation Code, "wrapping it up in precisely the sort of restrictions that we were trying to get away from".

But Lady Sharp, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesperson in the House of Lords, said the agency's latest advice on using the code was a "major improvement... and really begins to give the flexibility we were asking for".

She said: "I am particularly pleased to see the range of examples given of the likely scope for use of the code — supporting employment and progression in employment, developing specific skills for specific sectors, reskilling and upskilling, preparation for and progress within an apprenticeship, and to support entrepreneurship."

"The main condition is that there should not be a qualification that exactly meets these needs. It doesn't have to be, at least initially, an accredited qualification, priority being to help get people into work and develop the qualification later."

The code was a key element of recommendations that emerged last year from the Colleges in their Communities Inquiry, chaired by Lady Sharp.

However, following her criticism the code had not been flexible enough, the agency this

month revised its guidance.

"We've listened to feedback from the sector and in response we've published revised guidance, in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Association of Employers and Learning Providers," said agency chief executive Kim Thorneycroft.

"Our goal is really to make sure that providers have as much scope as possible to deliver the mix of learning and skills training that is the right fit for their local area."

She added: "We know that if we are to put the FE system in the hands of the sector, and let them use their professional judgement to give learners and employers what they want, there won't always be a package of learning or skills training that an individual might need."

"So we need to do all we can to support the offer, so that FE is accountable to local people. And we must do more to support those out of work to gain the skills to compete in long-term sustainable employment."

"And this is where the Innovation Code comes into its own."

"It allows a college or training organisation to deliver the provision that is needed in their area, without having to wait for a new qualification to be developed — a true 'rapid response vehicle'."

Lady Sharp said: "This is a major improvement on the agency's earlier version and really begins to give the flexibility we were asking for."

"The new code does seem to give the two things we were looking for — flexibility and meeting local needs. I'm delighted the agency has responded to earlier criticisms and come up with something so much more positive."

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Editor's comment

Time to show off

It was the show we'd all been waiting for.

And wow, wasn't it worth the wait.

The Skills Show was a first and an all-singing, all-dancing celebration of UK vocational talent.

It was an immense privilege to watch proud young competitors show off a huge range of skills as inquisitive schoolchildren clamoured for a glimpse of their potential futures.

I met teachers hoping to find out about opportunities for their pupils.

They will do more for today's learners than any call centre or face-to-face careers service.

It simply must go on, and on, and on — year after year, getting bigger and bigger.

Our sincere congratulations to everyone involved, including the apprentices and trainees themselves.

Next stop for us will be cheering on Squad UK at WorldSkills in Leipzig next year.



Nick Linford, editor

Correction

Knowing your Balboa from your balboa could be the difference between watching an hexology of Sylvester Stallone films or paying for your beer at a bar in Panama.

If you were hard-up in Romania you might want to pay for your alcohol with some pot washing in lieu of leu.

Here of course we use pound sterling - not to be confused with Stirling, the place in Scotland.

The place, that is, where Professor John Field is a director of research in the local university. Yes, we got it wrong last week on his expert piece.

"Stirling rather than Sterling – you've triggered lots of predictable jokes about the Scottish currency after independence," he told editor Nick Linford.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.

Women 'not at' FE Colleges table

Chris Henwood

@chris_henwood

More taxpayers' cash should be spent on attracting women to college governors' boards in a bid to combat under-representation, according to the Women's Leadership Network (WLN).

The campaign group's chair, Sally Dicketts (pictured right) said the "magnitude of the role and the need to have the right people" meant more needed to be done to get women in roles of governance at colleges.

"There is a strong business case for using colleges' existing expertise and HR resource to ensure the process of recruiting governors is similar to that of appointing senior staff, rather than the largely informal processes currently used, which offer insufficient rigour," she said.

Ms Dicketts, who is also principal of Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, spoke out after research by WLN showed just how badly women were under-represented on FE college governor boards.

It found they had almost twice as many men and that less than 18 per cent of FE chairs were women.

It further found committees were almost three times as likely to be chaired by a man

and in just 2.5 per cent of cases were governors appointed through competitive interviews.

"Colleges may worry about spending public funds on expensive recruitment processes for a volunteer board, but the magnitude of the role and the need to have the right people, and the right mix of people, must also be considered," said Ms Dicketts.

"The majority of governors are men and most have been in the role for more than three years and some for more than ten, thus perpetuating the dominant culture."

The purpose of the WLN research was to examine the performance of the FE sector in the context of Lord Davies' February 2011 report Women on Boards, which highlighted the under-representation on corporate boards.

It looked at the positive contributions of women on boards and made a series of recommendations to improve the gender mix.

"As Lord Davies said, this is not a 'gender numbers game' — it is about the richness of a board that can combine different perspectives, backgrounds, life experiences and skills to offer a fully rounded view of a college's achievements, ambitions, strategic decisions and forward plans, and to offer staff and students a clear demonstration of women's achievement and success," added Ms Dicketts.

Rob Wye, chief executive of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, which



funded the research, said: "This is an important and useful piece of research into the gender diversity on FE boards, and provides an excellent resource for corporations to better understand the national picture of women's involvement in FE governance."

Dan Taubman MBE, senior national education official at the University and College Union, said: "We believe there should be monitoring of who exactly is on FE corporation, urgently. This kind of monitoring hasn't been done on a national scale for some time."

He added: "The number of black and minority ethnic FE governors is probably also fairly low."

Visit www.wlnfe.org.uk/downloads/FINALGovsSurveyReportvFinal.pdf to read the findings of the WLN research, carried out over six weeks this summer, in full.

Comments

Fears over conflict of interest

Those in charge of apprenticeships have lost the plot. Industrial and commercial organisations (i.e business) should be running apprenticeships - nobody else.

Apprenticeships are NOT college courses - the clueless in charge should take a look at the German system.

Website from 'Telling the truth'

Not sure Elmfield Training Ltd are an AO or award their own certificates, SkillsFirst is a separate entity with separate governance, just common ownership. May seem like a minor point, but nuances are different to being a single entity.

Website from Mark C

Adrian Bailey MP – Q&A on apprenticeship report

I've read the report and recognise much of it as an accurate reflection of the apprenticeship system and I agree with many of the observations and recommendations.

However, there is one major omission. Apprenticeships require a job and there is nobody with the resource and clear responsibility to help young people find jobs. When I have presented to school students on apprenticeships and (hopefully) enthused

them, the first thing they ask is 'who will help us find a job?' I'll leave that question with you.

Website from Paul Mitchell, Sussex Council of Training Providers

Teachers unskilled to provide careers advice

It's lucky then that Gove has devolved all responsibility for careers guidance to schools.

Website from Peter Cobrin, Apprenticeships England

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FE Week profile

Martin Doel ~ his story



Janet Murray
@jan_murray

The Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges, speaks to FE Week

On the day he should have been sitting his maths A level, Martin Doel was in hospital after being hit by a cricket ball. And it wasn't the first or last time sport got in the way of his studies.

Growing up in Romsey, Hampshire, he spent most of his time playing "football, rugby, cricket, basketball...anything with a ball involved."

He walked out of his maths 'A' level after 15 minutes (having spent most of his time in the sixth form inventing excuses not to go to lessons) and left Totton Grammar School with two 'A' levels rather than the three he needed to get into Durham University.

After a year out, working as a milkman and stock control clerk, and in bars and restaurants in Switzerland, he went to King Alfred's College in Winchester, where he studied PE with education.

While he enjoyed the course, and achieved a first class degree, Doel became disillusioned with the idea of being a teacher. Having concluded that the philosophy of PE teaching was about "throwing a ball around and keeping them [the students] quiet for an

hour," by the end of his time at King Alfred's, he just couldn't see himself working in a school. He recalls: "I'd really thought about how I wanted to deliver the subject and I thought there was so much more children could achieve through the medium of physical education that would benefit their wider development...I'm sure things are different now, but I knew I wouldn't get the space to take control of that at the time."

"By the time my eldest was 11, he had been to five schools, and we really couldn't carry on like that"

He joined the RAF instead, rising quickly through the ranks to senior roles, including working in an underground bunker in Scotland gathering intelligence on Soviet submarines (something he insists was not as glamorous as it sounds), supporting operations in the Balkans and leading an exercise that involved handing back an air base to the Germans, for which he was awarded an OBE in 1998.

But while he enjoyed having a new job every 18 months, and the experience of living abroad, the downside was disruption

to family life, particularly for his two young children. "By the time my eldest was 11, he had been to five schools, and we really couldn't carry on like that," he recalls. "We enjoyed it [living abroad] as a family together, but it was just so disruptive to the children's education...they had to go and stand in the playground and be the new boy every two years."

"I soon realised you couldn't say 'subordinate' here [at the AOC] but you could say 'I want to do something'"

The family returned to the UK in 1997 and Doel did a masters degree in War Studies at King's College, before becoming director of studies there - a post created as a result of a partnership between the RAF and the university. His next challenge involved merging three RAF bases in Cambridge and Bedfordshire, at one point having 1000 people working directly under him and - for the first time during his 20 years in the RAF - learning to fly a plane.

His decision to leave the air force in 2008, was motivated by the desire to plan the next chapter of his working life and "not just come out at the last moment and take what's on offer." (the retirement age for those in the services is generally around 55)

And having been involved in vocational education and training during his time in the RAF, the idea of working in education appealed to him and played to his strengths. So when the opportunity to lead the Association of Colleges came along, he jumped at the chance.

One of the biggest challenges was getting used to the fast pace of change in the sector, he says. "We had LSDA, QIA, CEL and any other number of acronyms you can think of that seemed to just come and go."

And it wasn't just the acronyms that took some getting used to. "I soon realised you couldn't say 'subordinate' here [at the AOC] but you could say 'I want to do something,'" he laughs. "And I had to learn the 'we' word, as in 'we are going to do this.' I mean, the belief and behaviours are no different...but the language is."

While the sector continues to deliver quality to students, it has been "under resourced in comparison to other sectors for too long," says Doel. "How is it that 16 to 18-year-olds in particular can be funded at a rate much lower than 11 to 16-year-olds...and why is that 16 to 24-year-olds are suddenly much cheaper to train or educate than those in universities?"

But it is still too early to measure the

impact of the some government austerity measures, such as scrapping of the EMA or the introduction of FE loans, although early indications suggest it the most "vulnerable learners in the most vulnerable sectors" who will be affected, says Doel.

The publication of the government's New Challenges, New Chances report - and in particular the proposals for a simplified funding system - represent an opportunity for colleges to have greater freedom and respond more closely to the needs of the communities they serve. But after years of being "micromanaged by the Learning and Skills Council," it is a big change of culture for some colleges," he says. At the same time, the government is introducing a number of strategies to encourage growth and Doel is concerned that this single stream of money promised to colleges could be compromised by new initiatives like the employer ownership pilot - sending them back to "chasing streams of money," just as they were before.

The next big challenge for the AOC, in partnership with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) is the FE Guild - a new professional body that will set standards and codes of behaviour as well as develop qualifications for the sector - which could be up and running as early as next August. The biggest challenge, says Doel, will be bringing together a "disparate" sector, getting everyone in agreement and behind the initiative.

While he is reticent to be "self-congratulatory" about his successes in the role, he concedes that he was pleased by the AOC's response to the capital funding fiasco. "It was a major crisis which was bad news for colleges but I think we as an association I think we found our voice again, particularly when it came to engaging with local MPS and in parliament.

"Colleges are hugely effective organisations that serve their communities and deserve a credible voice on their behalf. If we are being listened to in a considered way, that's something I'm very proud of."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

What did you want to be when you were younger?

A pilot

What do you do to switch off from work?

Watch football since I can't play any more

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

Alistair Cooke, Katherine Hepburn and Edith Cavell

What would your super power be?

To be able to read people's minds

FE Week Experts

Facing the inspectors

Four years ago City College Plymouth got a satisfactory grade from Ofsted inspectors and the heat was back on last month when it became the first general FE college to come under the microscope of Ofsted's new inspection regime. Deputy principal Nicola Cove describes the experience and tells how the college managed to improve on its previous grade.

Inspection under the new common inspection framework (CIF) was certainly a very different experience. But at its core, inspectors focused rightly on how the college was meeting the individual needs of students.

“I’d advise any college anticipating an Ofsted visit to have a second trained nominee in place to provide capacity”

The visit was intense. The aspect inspectors all arrived by noon on day one; by 2pm the first graded and joint observation was taking place.

Overall, inspectors carried out more than 75 graded observations, numerous learning walks

and observed many other student activities, which we actively encouraged them to do.

The number of meetings, a feature of the old CIF, was much reduced. There were about 10 over the full week, most of them completed by the leadership and management inspector.

Although success rates and data takes more of a back seat under this framework, they do impact on judgments and, with hindsight, we would have done more advance work around progression, particularly into employment - and the quality (longevity) of that employment - and the use of value added scores.

The role of the nominee is even more critical and demanding. I was our nominee, but was extremely well-supported by two colleagues — our director of quality improvement and our vice-principal — which added extra capacity to the internal team. This was important in pulling together and disseminating information and messages throughout the organisation during the week.

I’d advise any college anticipating an Ofsted visit to have a second trained nominee in place to provide capacity (every nominee needs a ‘wing-man’) but also to protect against availability, something that could be an issue with two days’ notice.

We had been anticipating an inspection for the past 12 months and therefore a great deal of thought and pre-planning was already in place.

For the start of term in September, all teams had their three-year trend data packs and the director of quality improvement and vice-prin-

cipal led whole-college refresher briefings on what to expect when the inspection took place.

We had two action plans in place for Ofsted readiness — one around longer-term planning (all of those key documents that need to be collated and kept up-to-date) and one to be implemented as soon as the principal received notification.

“Many staff worked through the weekend and the college was open to anyone who wanted to come in, although with no expectation that they should.”

The detail was immense and shouldn’t be under-estimated — down to the level of booking car parking spaces, having enough room keys and inspectors’ names for ID badges.

The pre-planning made the four days’ preparation time much smoother than it otherwise would have been. Many staff worked through the weekend and the college was open to any-



one who wanted to come in, although with no expectation that they should.

In some ways, the college found it easier to adapt to the short notice than Ofsted. As nominee, I was still working with the lead inspector on Monday morning to fully define the planning and scope of areas to be inspected; subject inspectors weren’t able to do much planning in advance, for example around timetables and so forth.

Overall, the outcome of the visit (a grade of “good” with outstanding features) was fantastic for the college, but also an incredibly positive and galvanising experience for all students and staff.

Although it was intense at the time, staff overwhelmingly preferred the short notice to a more drawn out three-week notice period.

Nicola Cove, deputy principal at City College Plymouth

ADVERTORIAL

NCFE and colleges: Working together to support learners into employment

It’s interesting to note that according to recent independent research, commissioned by the Association of Colleges, employers view 17-18 year old college leavers as better prepared for work than school leavers of the same age (74% compared to 66%). What’s more, over 70% of parents think education should be more focused on preparing young people for employment.

NCFE is supporting National Colleges Week 2012, raising awareness of the vital role colleges play in improving young people’s work-readiness and employability. We are committed to working with colleges to ensure that young people leave college equipped with the skills and mindset they need to take their first step on the career ladder.

It was encouraging to see another drop in unemployment announced recently, with the jobless total dropping by 49,000 between July and September. As the UK economy continues on the road to recovery unemployment is at its lowest level for more than a year, with the latest reduction driven largely by under-

25s finding work.

However, competition for jobs is still fierce, and thorough preparation really can help young people to stand out from the crowd and make the most of opportunities that come their way. Through quality employability education, job seekers can learn how to identify vacancies, promote themselves, present themselves at interview and maximise their chances of success.

In order to bridge the gap between education and the world of work NCFE offers a wide range of employability related qualifications, which prepare learners for the challenge of job seeking which for many can become a job in itself! Examples of these qualifications include Employability Skills, Enterprise Skills, Developing Skills for the Workplace, Getting on at Work, Making Progress, Personal and Social Development, Interpersonal Skills and Learning to Learn.

NCFE has also formed an innovative collaboration with recruitment specialists REED in Partnership to offer a flexible solution for colleges looking to support learners

into work and enhance their organisation’s employability reputation in the local community. The REED NCFE Partnership provides a suite of qualifications in Job Search and Interview Skills together with a bespoke programme of student and employer engagement, employment consultation, job brokerage, careers advice and work experience.

As the Government continues to promote the value of a solid academic grounding, it’s important not to forget the worth of quality, rigorous vocational training which can work hand in hand with traditional subjects.....

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- get in touch with your local Business Development team on 0191 239 8000* or at news@ncfe.org.uk
- visit our qualification pages online and search for employability related qualifications of interest
- find out more about the REED NCFE Partnership at www.reed-ncfe.org.uk

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FE Week Experts

Standing out from the cloud

The quality of IT provision is key to giving a place of learning an edge. So Hertford Regional College (HRC) decided to do something visionary — and it's now helping others, explains Andy Forbes.

When we designed and built a new campus, completed in 2009, we gained a lot of experience that we felt should be shared with other schools and colleges.

We had the luxury of leading-edge ICT, but soon realised that does not in itself guarantee better learning outcomes or greater efficiency. So in 2010 we developed Hertford Regional College Computing Consortium (HRC Cube) to address both these issues.

IBM, who had supplied our core IT infrastructure, introduced us to a number of their business partners, which led to HRC Cube. This included our exclusive agreement with the Thor Data Centre in Iceland that allows us to provide cost effective green cloud computing solutions.

HRC Cube is about sharing experience. The technical expertise contained within our partnership enables us to deliver innovative solutions to problems common to education. Too often, IT expenditure is seen as a necessary evil; a self-perpetuating cycle of increasingly

costly hardware and software upgrades that deliver little real advantage.

We are all constantly striving to achieve more with less. But over and above that, there is a real need to use ICT in an innovative way to improve the learner experience, an objective that will not be achieved through piecemeal and reactive solutions — a more strategic approach is required.

Capel Manor, a multi-site land-based college, had limited internal ICT expertise. Nonetheless, principal Stephen Dowbiggin realised the college was paying a high price for services that fell short of basic requirements.

HRC Cube initially performed a thorough infrastructure audit that recommended upgrades to connectivity, reconfiguration of network infrastructure and introduction of remote server and desktop management. This improved efficiency and reliability and relieved the small ICT team of many maintenance tasks, freeing them to provide more direct support for teachers using technology in the classroom.

Milton Keynes College with a large ICT team was, in many ways, at the opposite end of the spectrum. Yet staff were once again spending most of their time supporting systems rather than delivering learning.

The challenge was to provide a flexible and

efficient learning environment that would be at the centre of teaching activities. At the same time, principal Julie Mills realised the college had to face spiralling ICT costs.

Again, HRC Cube began with an ICT audit. Core network and domain structures, which had evolved over time, had not been planned with any particular strategy in mind. The priority was to make the network fit for purpose, a purpose defined by the college's ICT strategy. The recommendations from the HRC Cube audit formed a prioritised project plan.

In parallel with this work, HRC Cube supported Milton Keynes in migrating their Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to MOODLE 2, and to host this from the Thor Data Centre. Performance has improved, and the VLE has been available 100 per cent of the time since migration was completed.

Other improvements, such as remote server and desktop management, have enabled Milton Keynes to reduce their overall ICT overheads, but more importantly to begin to enable ICT staff to spend more time directly supporting the learning environment.

Capel Manor and Milton Keynes College are just two of the organisations that HRC Cube has helped to re-focus their ICT expenditure.

To raise awareness about the benefits of their



innovative partnership between a college and IT companies, HRC will host a breakout session, Developing College IT systems to improve learning — using technology to improve teaching and learning, on Thursday, November 22, at the Association of Colleges' annual conference. I will be among the speakers, as will Dr Mills and Dr Dowbiggin.

Andy Forbes is principal of Hertford Regional College

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FE Week Experts

Taking aim at outstanding

Sue Rimmer explains why her college decided to focus on improving the quality of its curriculum management

South Thames College aims to provide the best education and training that we can while continuing to build a successful, inclusive college that responds to the needs of learners, stakeholders and local communities. Judged good by Ofsted in 2009 and again this year, and following our 2009 merger with Merton College, we wanted to continue to build our capacity and develop a pathway to move to outstanding.

We recognised that ensuring consistently high standards comes from strong and effective leadership and management at all levels. For us a key priority was to focus on improving the quality of our curriculum management. We had participated in various management development programmes over the years and therefore decided to develop a bespoke programme for the heads of school that would meet our aims and ambitions, while aligning with our culture, values and ethos.

“We were clear that we would lead from the top, set out expectations clearly and ensure the programme had impact”

We also wanted participation to have impact and credibility, so chose to work with the Association of Colleges so that we could mirror the Sector Management College programme to create something that had both an immediate impact but also helped contribute towards a lasting legacy for the sector.

We were clear that we would lead from the top, set out expectations clearly and ensure the programme had impact. We started by assessing the present skill levels of all participating managers and built a competency framework that was linked to the appraisal process.

We developed four central modules, each of which had a member of the senior management team as a lead. The modules were: managing people, managing curriculum & quality, managing finance, managing information.

We established a competency matrix that enabled participants to assess their present skill level and, using the same methodology as our classroom observation scheme, to grade themselves against each competency as satisfactory (below expectations), good (meets expectations) and outstanding (exceeds expectations). They then compared their



assessment to that of their line manager and, between them, identified areas for development. This was an empowering part of the process.

The competencies focused on promoting high standards as a norm across the organisation, embedding strategic planning for the future, developing a more coherent understanding of our customers, utilising management information more effectively, deploying resources appropriately, investing in personal and team development and using the strength of colleagues as a collective.

The competencies reiterated the importance of safeguarding learners and the promotion of equality and diversity as central tenets to good teaching and learning. The programme also considered the importance of internal and external communication and how managers are critical to the conveyance of corporate messages effectively and in context.

“We have noticed more innovation and sharing of good practice”

Feedback has been very positive. Staff have reported feeling more empowered, clearer about their roles and responsibilities and with a better understanding of their accountabilities. We have noticed more innovation and sharing of good practice.

It was important not to stop there. We had to consider how to ensure that skills remain embedded and updated. We are introducing a series of bite-size updates as part of ongoing CPD which all managers will have access to.

Having made an initial investment in the development of this tier of management, we wanted to work with the Sector Management College so any new heads of school who joined the college would have an equivalent programme that they could undertake.

Sue Rimmer OBE is principal and chief executive of South Thames College.

Working together to help learners with difficulties

Supporting students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities in mainstream FE has seen Treloar and Alton Colleges develop a strong and lasting partnership, according to their principals

Treloar is a specialist institution for around 170 students with significant disabilities; Alton is a sixth-form college primarily providing education and training for more than 2,000 16 to 19-year-olds.

Most Treloar students are residential and the college has a multi-disciplinary approach in which care, health, therapy, education and other staff work together on targets set for each student. There are more than 700 staff which gives some indication of the complex and comprehensive nature of the available support.

Students have a wide range of cognitive abilities with a significant number on level three courses. Many progress to higher education.

For young people who lack confidence or social skills, the residential option is best. Equally, a mainstream setting is more appropriate for others. Treloar provides person-centred multi-disciplinary assessments that often combine therapy and assistive technology, such as wheelchair modifications, a communication device or specialist computer technology.

But the college's outreach work – such as its 15-year partnership with Alton College – brings specialist expertise to a mainstream setting for those students for whom it is more appropriate.

Around 15 per cent of Treloar students study during the day at Alton, where they benefit from a broader curriculum and integration with mainstream students.

Alton has adapted its buildings and facilities and trained its staff in supporting students with complex disabilities. It also integrates students into a range of learning settings, plus social and other activities such as representation on the students' union executive.

The partnership has survived four different funding agencies and is not dependent on grant funding. It is sustainable through a memorandum of agreement that covers pre-entry assessment and guidance, programme support, learning support, assessment and recording of academic progress, pastoral support, examinations, support packages, liaison with parents, professionals and other agencies.

It also covers information, advice and guidance regarding progression, quality assurance and improvement, disciplinary/misconduct codes, communication and staff roles, financial agreements and arrangements for charging, safeguarding and health and safety.

There are many examples of students' success that would not have been possible without this long-standing partnership.

These include David Smith, 23, who won silver and bronze at London 2012 Paralympics in boccia – a sport based on the popular French game of boules or petanque. He is studying aerospace engineering at Swansea University having completed A-levels in maths and physics, and AS-levels in further maths, English language and physical education at Alton College. David has cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia.

Nicole Evans, 26, did the London Marathon and triathlon this year after completing her degree in sports coaching and development at the University of Leeds.

She did A levels in psychology and physical education, an AS level in biology, a GCSE in human physiology and a health and sports leader award at Alton College. Nicole has cerebral palsy.

At the Association of Colleges' annual conference Ms Machell and Mr Stone will lead a seminar on the value and success of specialist learning providers and mainstream colleges working in partnership.

Jane Machell is principal of Alton College; John Stone is principal of Treloar College.

The Leadership Exchange: an agent of change

All sectors of the economy require strong leadership — and none more so than FE, says Asha Khemka OBE

Leading in the learning and skills sector has never been more challenging or more exciting. We are entering a new era, with a strong emphasis on increased freedoms and the need to drive economic growth. Leaders must be able to rise to the challenge of ensuring the delivery of outstanding learning within efficient and sustainable organisations.

We are faced with two immediate and real challenges: the need to identify and develop a critical mass of leaders to replace those leaving the sector, and the need to recruit more governors with the right knowledge and behaviours to support organisations in an increasingly flexible operating environment.

The Leadership Exchange will act as an agent of change by setting the agenda for leadership, management and governance across the whole sector.

Led by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), it is supported by senior leaders from bodies such as the Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 157 Group, Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted.

It will look to influence and shape govern-

ment learning and skills policy by stimulating strategic discussions and encouraging the exchange of ideas so that those who understand the sector can shape its direction.

It will ensure leaders, managers and governors have access to support and development to be not just outstanding leaders of learning, but leaders of outstanding and commercially-viable learning organisations. Key to this will be the development of a leadership framework combining work-shadowing, mentoring, networking and sharing of ideas.

“We need to create a culture where everyone in the organisation feels that it is their business”

It is also crucial the exchange speaks to and for the whole learning and skills sector in a way that recognises the diversity of providers.

The theme running through all of this is impact. The Leadership Exchange is being developed by the sector, for the sector, to deliver real and sustainable impact that can be felt by those relying on us for their learning.

Outstanding leaders and managers drive

their organisation in the right direction. They energise and inspire people around them, focus on what really matters, and embrace the opportunities and challenges within the communities that they serve.

We need to create a culture where everyone in the organisation feels that it is their business, is empowered to make a difference and execute their ideas, isn't afraid to make mistakes, has determination, drive and energy, and, above all, takes ownership and responsibility. It is also about supporting leaders and governors to think afresh about their roles and responsibilities, and how they can influence raising the bar in teaching and learning.

A prospectus outlining the next phase in the exchange's development, including its strategic aims and priorities, will be published in December. We hope to be up and running in September next year.

The opportunities for the learning and skills sector to create an equal place for itself in the broader learning landscape has never been greater, but will require strong and imaginative leadership at all levels to achieve this.

It is a Brave New World — for those brave enough to lead this change.

Asha Khemka OBE, principal and chief executive of West Nottinghamshire College and chair of the Leadership Exchange



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FE Week campus round-up

Royal seal of approval for university centre



Plumbing student Tommy Jarvis, 22, with Prince Charles

Students in South London showed off their work to Prince Charles and Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, when they paid a visit to their college to open a new building.

Fashion and business graduate Michelle Miah was one of the Croydon College students that met the royals. "I was honoured to show The Duchess of Cornwall a selection of pieces from my collection, she really liked the coat I designed and was also impressed that I have set up my own business," she said.

Moriah Kanoyangwa, student vice activities officer, presented the Duchess

with a bouquet of flowers at the opening of the university centre. "Meeting her was an absolute pleasure, I feel very honoured that she asked me questions about my course and career. It is a day I will never forget," she said.

Frances Wadsworth, principal and chief executive, said: "We are enormously grateful to have Their Royal Highnesses come to visit to mark this prestigious event. The University Centre Croydon is a tremendous asset to the community offering affordable, accessible and prestigious degrees, validated by University of Sussex."

Celebrity chef meets lucky students



Chef Gino D'Acampo (centre) with catering students John O'Connor, 27, and Asheeka Robinson, 17

Celebrity chef Gino D'Acampo had to navigate a rickety rope bridge when he opened a £2.8m college building.

The winner of *I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here* 2009 picked his way across a five metre long and three metre wide 3D crack in the earth at the entrance to the revamped campus in Wembley Park, London.

On his tour of the College of North West London the chef dropped in on catering students to give them some advice.

"I've been very impressed with the training

kitchens at the college. When I trained as a chef in Napoli we didn't have half of the equipment that they have here. These students are very lucky," said Mr D'Acampo

"Today's been great. So many people turned up and it was good to see what the college has to offer. We should have more colleges like this. It gives the people in the community the opportunity to learn new skills so they can find good jobs."

Mr D'Acampo was joined by the Mayor of Brent Michael Adeyeye at the opening.



Public service student Jack Hull, 16, gets his legs waxed by beauty therapy student Carla Atkinson, 18

sponsored by **empra**

Waxing lyrical over charity effort

You wouldn't expect boys to volunteer to get their legs waxed. But that's exactly what Jack Hull and Mark Kevin did to raise money for charity.

The 16-year-old public service students braved the pain inflicted by beauty therapy student Carla Atkinson, 18, for Children in Need at Warrington College.

"It hurt a lot, I didn't realise it was going to be so painful," said Mark.

"But I felt very proud, because the money really does change things for the better for children."

The leg waxing kicked off a host of events organised by students in a bid to raise hundreds of pounds, including an eight-hour triathlon, with students running, cycling and rowing 150 miles.

Paddle sports prize winner

AN Norfolk college tutor has been presented with an award by one of his sporting heroes.

Outdoor adventure course leader Adam Williams was handed his trophy at a national awards ceremony celebrating those who support paddle sports by Olympic silver canoeing medallist David Florence.

"I couldn't quite believe it when my name was read out as the winner of the education award," said City College Norwich tutor Mr Williams.

"I am extremely proud to have won. The biggest thing for me is that I just really enjoy working with students and helping to train the next generation of canoe instructors for the outdoor industry."

When Mr Williams joined the college he established canoe instructor training as a core component of the course, which also gives students opportunities to gain instructor qualifications in climbing, mountain biking, bush craft and other outdoor activities at Eaton Vale Activity Centre.

Outdoor adventure student Kayleigh Nicholson, 17, said: "Adam is a really good canoeing coach. He puts a lot of time towards it and pushes you to do the best that you can. He gets us out on the water as often as possible and uses lots of different techniques to keep you motivated and interested. Adam is a lot of fun and has a great relationship with all of the students."

A former GB paddlesport competitor, Mr Williams has played a key role in the development of the successful BTec extended diploma in sport at City College Norwich.



From left: outdoor adventure course leader Adam Williams and Olympic Silver medallist David Florence

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

Greggs offer tasty opportunity to retail students



From left: students Hayleigh McDermott, 22, Sarah Houghton, 19, and Liam Lincoln, 23

A college in the North East has offered out-of-work young people a tasty introduction to the world of retail.

The three-week 'Get into Retail' programme, run by The Prince's Trust, was delivered by Middlesbrough College in partnership with baking company Greggs. The Level one qualification in retail skills was awarded to the 13 students who completed the course.

One success story for the programme were Sarah Houghton, 19, from Eston, who won a job at Marks & Spencer — but asked if she could start the day after graduation so she could complete the course.

"The course gave me a chance to extend

my knowledge and skills in customer service, and I learnt so much on my placement with Greggs," she said.

"These skills came in really useful when I went for my job interview at Marks & Spencer."

As part of the programme, the students also sold Greggs products at a pop-up store in the college, making £126 for a local charity.

Mike Hopkins, principal at the college, said he hoped the course would be the first of many. "I'm thrilled by how well our 'Get into Retail' students have done. It goes to show that courses like this can be the first stepping stones to jobs and opportunity."



Joy Lynch, apprenticeship co-ordinator and lecturer, with foal Lola

Lola the donkey helps raise £100 for horses

A little donkey has helped raise £100 for a charity with South Yorkshire students and staff competing to name the newborn.

Born in stables run by Doncaster College, the foal was named Lola after apprenticeship co-ordinator and lecturer Joy Lynch's suggestion won the raffle.

Ms Lynch, who has worked at the college for 12 years, said: "I looked at her photo, and she was posing perfectly, then I thought of

the Barry Manilow song 'Her name was Lola', she was a show girl.' And I thought it was perfect.

"When I went to see her I thought she was adorable and so cute. She wanted to be the centre of attention, was full of fun, and loved to show off in the field."

The money raised was donated to Bransby Home of Rest for Horses, which rescues neglected horses.

Blooming brilliant Christmas decorating at Nottingham college



Floristry students Sarah Otter, 17 and Lizzy Kirk, 61

For the tenth year running an East Midlands college has been chosen to deck the halls of an Elizabethan mansion.

Floristry students at New College Nottingham have been chosen to decorate the rooms and walkways of Wollaton Hall for its Christmas events.

Students were set the challenge to create Tudor-themed designs without using a single flower. Instead they used fresh garden foliage

and natural materials from the grounds of Wollaton Hall — making animals out of moss, and using fruits and vegetables to give colour to decorations.

Jayne Stevenson, 55, enrolled at the college when she was made redundant from Lloyds Bank after 37 years of service. She said: "It was always a life-long ambition to work in floristry so this gave me the push I needed to get started."

"I would like to become a freelance florist and the course at the college is excellent because it's tailored towards commercial floristry so we're constantly learning and adapting our skills ready for the industry."

Floristry lecturer Catherine Hampson said: "It's always such a pleasure to transform Wollaton Hall and it provides an excellent opportunity for our students to gain real work experience."

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Prime Minister congratulates IT apprentices



From left: Luke Hennerley, 18, David Robertson, 20, chief executive of Microsoft Steve Ballmer, Cheyenne Brown, 21, Prime Minister David Cameron, Ben Freeman, 18, and Charlie Gilbert, 18, at Number 10 Downing Street

Award-winning IT apprentices got the chance to speak with the Prime Minister at the launch of a Microsoft campaign to help young people get jobs.

Five QA Apprenticeship trainees met David Cameron at 10 Downing Street when Steve Ballmer, chief executive of Microsoft, announced the company's new Get On initiative, which hopes to get young people mastering Microsoft systems for jobs.

The global technology giant has partnered with QA Apprenticeship to roll out the scheme over the next three years.

The winners of the Microsoft Apprentice of the Year awards, David Robertson, 20,

Charlie Gilbert, 18, Cheyenne Brown, 21, Ben Freeman and Luke Hennerley, both took part in a workshop with Microsoft on how to best support young people getting jobs.

Ben Pike, director of QA Apprenticeships, said: "Today's event is a powerful advertisement for the potential of apprenticeships to change the face of education and the job market for the UK's young people. Microsoft and QA have enjoyed a very successful partnership over the last few years and we are pleased to not only see our apprentices reaping the benefits at today's meeting with Mr Cameron, but also a renewed focus for the future."

Touch FM DJ drops in for masterclass



Mark O'Sullivan (front), Touch FM Breakfast DJ, with students Tom Eyre, 19, Sam Wallis, 19, April Goode, 16, Jack Mines, 17, and Jake Boulter, 18

Creative arts and journalism students got the inside track on making it in radio when a breakfast DJ paid their college a visit.

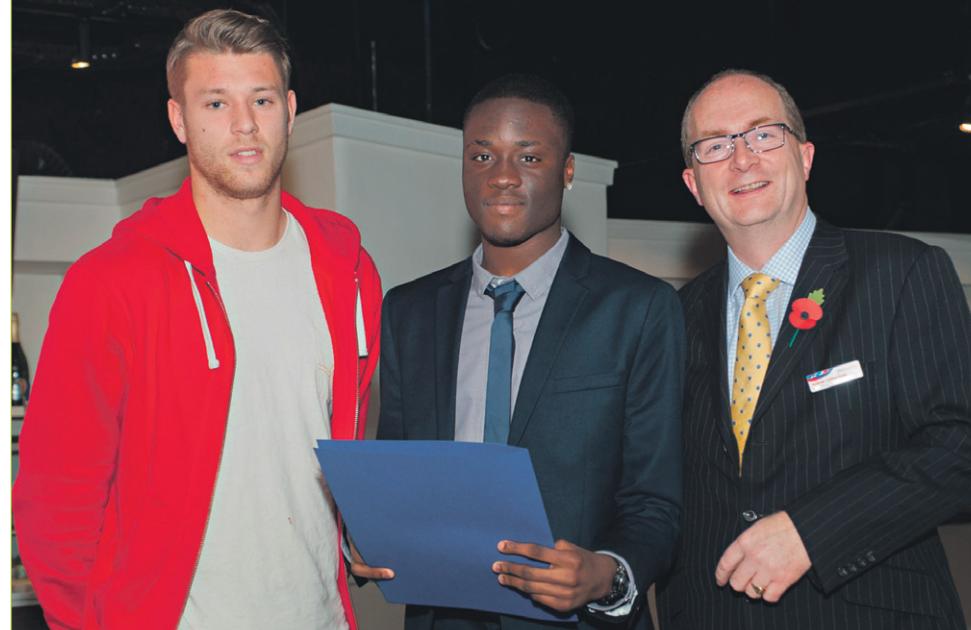
Mark O'Sullivan, from local radio station Touch FM, dropped in on Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC) students to talk about his experiences in the industry.

The presenter, who began his career in broadcasting at the age of 18 at Derby Hospital Radio, was joined by newsreader Lindsey Alder to give advice.

Mr O'Sullivan, who recently presented an awards ceremony at the college, said: "After

seeing firsthand the fantastic work put in by both the staff and learners at a Further Education awards evening, I felt that I could offer some insight into the radio industry to Burton and South Derbyshire College media students. Touch FM already has a longstanding relationship with the college, and hopefully working BSDC students will strengthen the relationship further."

Amanda Skevington, the college's programme area manager, said: "His experiences of working in the broadcasting industry provided great inspiration to our learners."



From left, Aston Villa player Nathan Baker with award winner Taiwo Olaleye, 16, and head of TBG Learning Andrew Conlan-Trant

Football star on hand to reward inspiration

Aston Villa defender Nathan Baker took a break from the pitch to present trophies to West Midland learners.

The achievements of TBG Learning students were celebrated at an awards evening at Aston Villa football club, hosted by the player.

Among the 15 award winners was Taiwo Olaleye, 16, who picked up the inspiration prize.

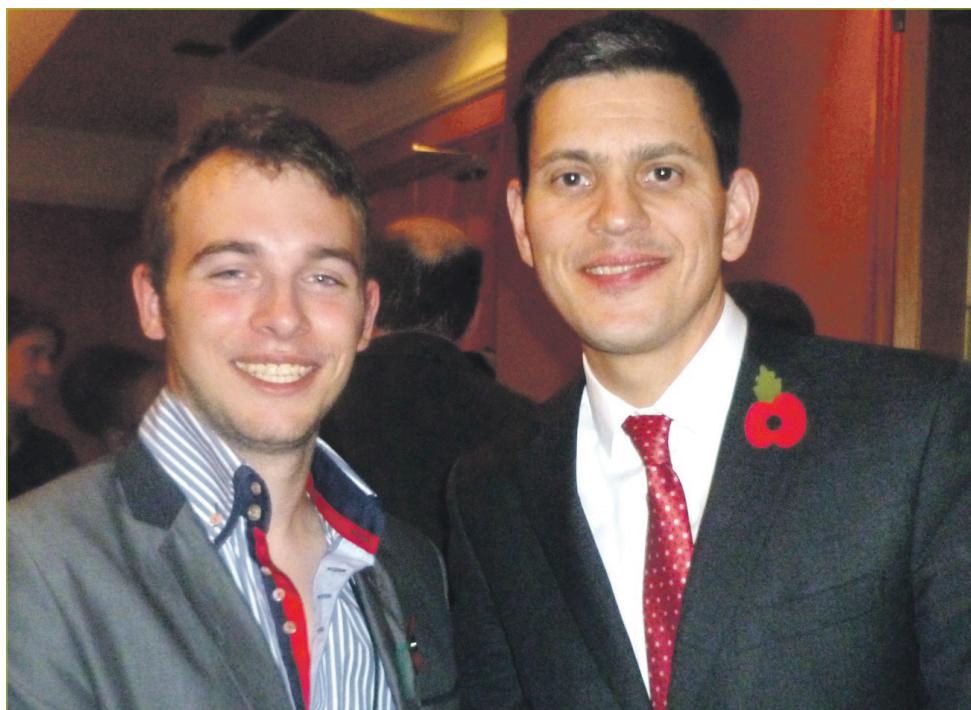
"At first to be honest I thought the course would be a waste of time, but after just a couple of weeks I started to learn new skills, and I'm now doing three AS-Levels at college," he said.

"I'm really happy with where I am now. I've never won anything before so was surprised and happy to win this."

Around 100 people attended, including Jacob Colliare, 18, who left school with no qualifications.

"I finished school early without any GCSEs, but now I've got some worthwhile qualifications which I need to get somewhere in life. TBG Learning has opened up a lot of doors for me which I'd like to thank them for. It felt great to pick up the determination award in front of my family."

Student talks money with David Miliband



Canterbury College's Students' Union president Josh Rowlands, 21 with Shadow Foreign Secretary David Miliband

AKent student has met former Foreign Secretary David Miliband to campaign for a national living wage.

Students' Union president Josh Rowlands, 21, told the MP about the work Canterbury College had done to support the introduction of an hourly pay rate based on the basic cost of living at a reception at Millbank in London for Living Wage Week.

"Mr Miliband said it was good to see what the college has done towards the living wage and that he hopes Canterbury can be a prime example of what can happen if more employers embrace it," said Josh.

"He was interested to hear that we are one of the few further education colleges working towards being accredited as a living wage employer."

The Students' Union had been working with Unison to spread the message to colleges and universities in the area," he said

Josh added: "A lot of students do bar and restaurant work to supplement their studies and I'd like to see more employers aspire to increase their wages."

Canterbury College's future wage increases will keep in line with the living wage, which is re-assessed once a year," he said.

Life changing charity experience for Wiltshire College student

The stench of rubbish beneath row upon row of rickety scrap metal houses in Kenya still haunts 19-year-old Lydia Hayward.

The Wiltshire College student's heart broke when she watched children risk infection and disease as they played on rubbish-strewn land.

"Mounds and mounds of rubbish were piled up with little houses on top made from scrap metal," said Lydia, who took part in a charity trip in April. The smell was horrendous and pigs were wallowing in the dirt. Kids were playing barefoot on the rubbish thinking nothing of it.

"There were lots of things that were hard to watch, but you just get on with it."

She was one of 13 from her college to go on the two-week trip having raised £1,500.

They volunteered at two education centres in Nakuru for children living in nearby slums that had either been orphaned or come from families too poor to meet their basic needs.

While at the Walk Centre and the Melon Centre the students taught classes, prepared and served meals and repaired buildings.

They took clothes with them, plus stationary and paint to waterproof buildings against the heavy rains that hit Kenya in the middle of the year. They also helped build a house for widow Miriam, using mud and sticks, as hers was about to collapse.

"It was really hard, because I became really

attached to the children, and knowing that after school they had to go back there, it was horrible," said Lydia, the nursery nurse at Humpy Dumpty in Wiltshire.

"Seeing the children living on the dump really hit home to me what their lives were like."

She also taught at the Walk Centre, which gives children who call the local rubbish dump home a basic education, regular meals and emotional support. And this month her team won The Bill Norris Award handed out by Wiltshire College for its efforts on the trip.

"The centre makes a real difference to children," said Lydia, who studied childcare and education at Wiltshire College.

"It gives them their only meal of the day, ugali and cabbage, so if it wasn't there they wouldn't even be fed."

"I was really scared before I went out there, I didn't know what to expect and was unsure how I could help, but when I got there I realised that every little thing you do does actually have an impact. The kids knew we were just there for them, we had time to play with them and have fun, and they loved that."

"When we were driving away at the end all the children ran after our car calling our names. It was very emotional, we were all blubbing away."

In July next year she is going on a charity



Lydia Hayward with Blessing and Mary

trip to Uganda to work at a holiday club for two weeks.

"I could never go back to normal life, because this will always be on my mind. It's something that's always going to be part of my life now,

raising money for charity and volunteering at places that help children," she said.

The trip was organised by charity African Adventures and plans at the college for another visit next year are underway.

If your story is chosen as our featured campus roundup you will receive a contributor mug



Contributor

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From left to right: Hairdressing students, Kelsie Byrne, Laura Edwards and Rebecca Murphy, from Riverside College in Cheshire, modelled looks they'd created on each other in just 45 minutes

Hair-raisingly good talents

Chris Henwood

[@chris_henwood](http://www.twitter.com/chris_henwood)

The UK's largest skills and careers event inspired young people from across the country with demonstrations ranging from theatrical make-up artists and fashion students to bricklayers.

The first Skills Show, in Birmingham, showcased the nation's best young talent over the course of three days from Friday.

Nearly 50 'have-a-go' stands offered youngsters, their teachers, tutors and lecturers, the chance to try their hand at a new skill, trade or occupation.

Floristry, game design and bricklaying were among the bitesize careers tasters as around 200 companies, educators and training providers manned stands throughout three of the NEC's huge halls.

The event opened on Thursday night with a glitzy show at the nearby LG Arena where Business, Innovation and Skills Secretary of State Vince Cable MP paid tribute to organisers.

Indian drumming, gymnasts, urban dancing and performances by college students armed with umbrellas all featured in the show.

And Dragon's Den star Theo Paphitis, patron of the Skills Show, joined in events the following day as he helped out on a world record attempt at plaiting hair.

"As skills patron for the Skill Show I'm passionate about improving skills levels across the UK and ensuring that young people know about the huge range of opportunities available to them," he said.

"We need to help young people achieve their true potential by helping them discover the skills that enthuse and inspire them. It's been a wonderful opportunity for young people or those looking for a new direction to get face-to-face careers advice and also to literally have a go and learn new skills."

He added: "The economy needs growth a workforce with an improved skills base means that we are better-equipped as a nation to compete internationally. But don't forget the benefits to individuals too."

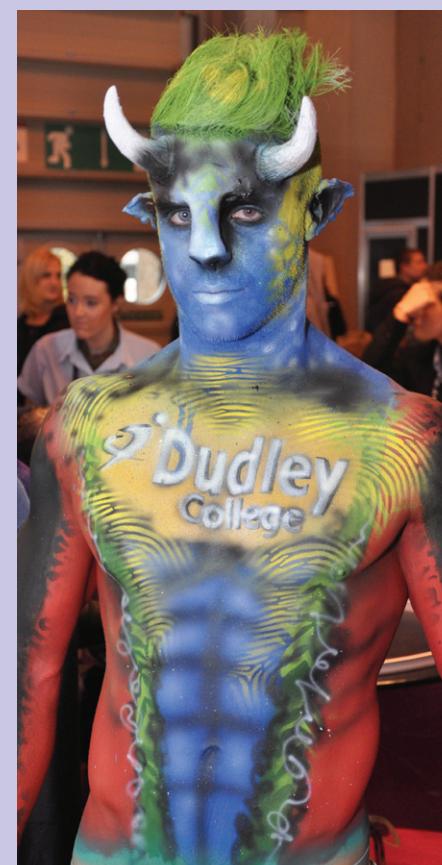
"People's confidence grows as they learn skills which makes their careers more fulfilling."

"This special ingredient is something that is impossible to measure but of crucial significance. The skills show will open up opportunities to more than 100,000 people. Many for the very first time."

"We need to boost enterprise and what better platform for the practically-minded individual than learning a skill? More than 50 different skills could be tried at the Skills Show where I challenged people to have a go at activities to see what they enjoy most. It was an insightful and entertaining way for people to discover a whole wealth of skills."

Further star guests included London Olympics hockey bronze medalist Sally Walton and BBC Apprentice finalist Nick Holzherr.

Skills Show chief executive Ross Maloney said: "We are confident the Skills Show will have helped young discover skills that inspire them and which, with the right support and advice, will help them realise their dreams."



Theatre artist students so talented they worked for Elton John showed off their skills creating illusional body art with airbrush paints.

Dudley College course tutor, Neil Hughes, who teaches production art, demonstrated the results (pictured) that could be achieved on models using special effects theatre make-up, at their skills stand.

He said his protégés had so impressed with their skills they benefitted from work experience doing party make-up for the international star's winter ball as well as completing stints with world-renowned designer, Jean-Paul Gaultier.

"Getting real work experience is so important and can lead to huge projects," he said.

World record-breaking plait

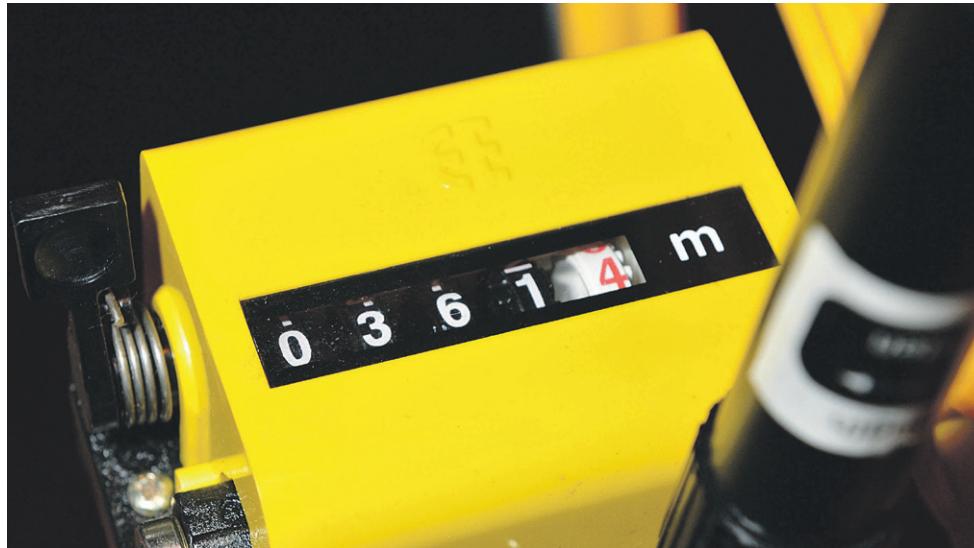
Staff and hairdressing students from South Gloucestershire and Stroud College weaved the world's longest plait extension attached to a model's head - measuring 361.4m in length, in the Have a Go section of the Skills Show.

The creation, made entirely from synthetic hair, grabbed attention throughout the day with more than 800 people contributing their handy work to a sec-

tion of the feat, including the Dragons' Den star.

An official Guinness World Record invigilator told the crowd the effort had trumped the previously-held world record set in Australia, by 65m.

The renowned entrepreneur who was a skills patron for the Skills Show presented the college with their official Guinness certificate.



Guinness adjudicator Manu Gautam presenting Jade Bryer, 22, an Apprentice Hair Stylist at Bliss Hair & Beauty in Bristol with the official certificate. Photo by Mark Allan/World Skills UK

THANK YOU

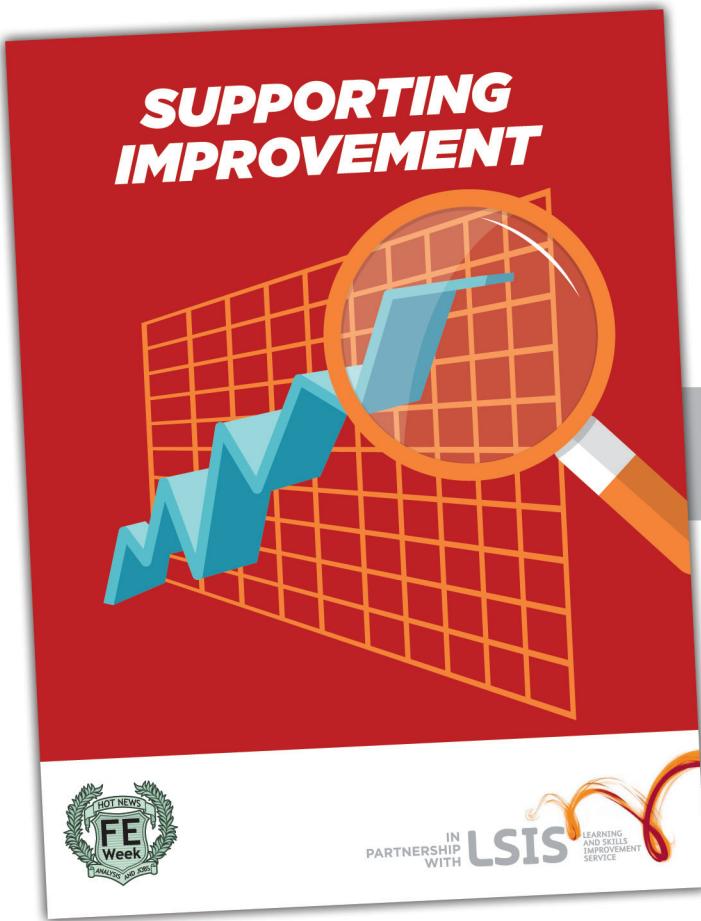
**TO EVERYONE
THAT MADE THIS YEAR'S
SKILLS SHOW
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Due to increasing demand, we are seeking to expand our candidate and associate pools for three of our key services:

Our Human Resources Task Force

has an outstanding reputation in delivering the right HR solution to a range of colleges.

Merger, restructure, reward and employee relations are just some of the areas in which we offer expert advice and guidance. Full Project Management and Business Process outsourcing are also important aspects of our service to a sector facing a future full of challenge. If you are fully CIPD qualified, have senior HR experience and can offer some understanding of the FE context, perhaps you have what it takes to join us?

Our Interim Management and Consultancy Service

provides outstanding interim managers and experienced consultants who specialise in the Further Education sector.

To meet the high levels of growth in this area, we are looking to add to our team of high quality interims and associates. We are looking for senior and middle managers with experience in all curriculum areas as well as quality, MIS, finance, learner services and commercial relationships.

Our Middle Management Recruitment Service

has established a successful track record in working with colleges on their permanent management appointments.

By understanding the sector, we find colleges the best talent available, first time, achieving a 100% success rate last year. If you are an aspiring manager of the future, or a current manager considering your next move, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you share our passion for the sector and feel that you have the skills and experience to make a difference, you are warmly invited to contact **Helen Anderson** on **0115 911 1117** who will arrange an informal discussion with one of our team. Alternatively, visit us on **Stand 59** at the **AoC Annual Conference in Birmingham** on the 20th to 22nd November.

In the first instance a copy of your CV can be forwarded to **David Beynon** at **dbeynon@collegeleadership.co.uk**

OUR INTERIM MANAGERS AND HR TASK FORCE ASSOCIATES ARE SELF-EMPLOYED AND RECEIVE COMPETITIVE RATES OF PAY

Funding and Data Manager

£31,299 to £38,496 per annum

Ref: 271213

This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced professional to manage and develop the College's student management and information systems.

We are seeking to appoint a passionate, innovative and inspiring leader with experience of proactively identifying, developing and presenting the timely provision of curriculum and performance management information to enable effective strategic and operational decision making.

You will have a demonstrable management track record of success with experience of successfully and accurately working to deadlines. Knowledge and experience of the Further Education sector and current funding methodology is essential together with the ability to ensure that systems are in place operate efficiently and effectively to enable the College to maximise potential funding.

If you have the skills and experience and would like to be part of our exciting future we would like to hear from you.

If you feel you have the qualities we are asking for and are looking for a new and exciting challenge then please apply online at www.bexley.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can email us at hr@bexley.ac.uk or call our 24 hour recruitment line for an application pack on **01322 404240**.

Please note the College does not accept CV's only.

Bexley College is committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and all posts are subject to an enhanced CRB disclosure prior to starting employment. The College looks to positively promote equality of opportunity and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

Closing date: 7th December 2012

Curriculum Team Manager – Plumbing & Electrical

£33,205 to £36,285 per annum

Ref: 191213

Bexley College is looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated manager to provide leadership to the team and management of all aspects of curriculum including, development, monitoring, reporting, course compliance and delivery resulting in outstanding teaching and learning and student achievement.

This role will focus on operational leadership, quality assurance and learning & teaching. Some delivery is required within your specialist subject area.

You must demonstrate proven experience and skills associated with the assessment and development of a quality student experience and knowledge of College data systems and the manner in which they can be used to improve student performance.

If you feel you have the qualities we are asking for and are looking for a new and exciting challenge then please apply online at www.bexley.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can email us at hr@bexley.ac.uk or call our 24 hour recruitment line for an application pack on **01322 404240**.

Please note the College does not accept CV's only.

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Closing date: 7th December 2012

» Are You Outstanding?



We have opportunities for experienced senior managers to help lead one of the largest FE Colleges in the Country with over **35,000 students** and an annual turnover of **£64 million**. These roles will take the College through a period of dynamic transformation and refocusing on quality and reputation. We are members of the prestigious 157 group, a Beacon College, hold the Training Standard and the Investors in People Gold Standard.



CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE

Deputy Principal - £110k

» Under the leadership of Lynn Merilion, recently appointed as Principal, the College aims to be 'outstanding'. The College is rated 'good' and financially strong, with over 2,000 staff engaged with stakeholders, communities and employers. The key to our further success is a strong focus on teaching and learning, in which this post holder will play a pivotal role. For this we are looking to appoint an inspirational leader as Deputy Principal with the experience to help us continue to be successful and move to outstanding.

The Role:

- Work with the Principal and Governors to determine the vision and direction of the College
- Lead on the College curriculum strategy and on quality standards to achieve "outstanding"
- Drive standards and motivate teams
- Ensure the learner voice is positive
- Deputise for the Principal
- Lead on quality, reputation, learners and on Higher Education

The Candidate:

- Be a leader with success in a "good" College showing an improving trend
- Would have led significant organisation and behavioural change
- Possess the skills to motivate and inspire others
- Have achieved "good" or "outstanding" at recent inspections and/or in QAA assessments
- Have a thorough understanding of FE, HE and the 14-19 agenda
- An ambition to become a Principal

Assistant Principal - Higher Education - £70k

» This is an exciting new role in which the post holder will establish a clear culture and ethos that creates a distinctive identity for Higher Education in the College. Reporting to the Deputy Principal you will manage the University Centre.

The Role:

- Grow an HE offer to meet ambitious income targets
- To plan and develop a modern and attractive HE and professional curriculum
- Manage the delivery of HE, Access to HE, Professional and International English curriculum
- Deliver outstanding HE teaching and learning

The Candidate:

- Experience at middle/senior management in an education institution offering HE
- Able to work innovatively and independently
- Achieved good or outstanding at recent inspections or with QAA
- Hold a Masters Degree

For an informal discussion please contact Lynn Merilion, Principal and Chief Executive, on **0117 312 5007**. If you share our commitment to teaching and learning and can demonstrate this please download the Candidate Brief from www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs or contact Hayley Sutton, Recruitment Officer, on hayley.sutton@cityofbristol.ac.uk for a pack.

In order to apply, please submit the following to hayley.sutton@cityofbristol.ac.uk:

A letter of application stating how you meet the criteria; a comprehensive C.V detailing your career history and current salary; details of two referees (neither of whom will be approached without your permission)

Closing Date: Sunday 25th November 2012

Interview Dates: Deputy Principal - Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th December 2012

Assistant Principal - Higher Education - Thursday 6th December 2012

A relocation package is available to the successful candidates.



Head of Skill Centres £35 - £45k plus PRP

Learning Curve Skill Centres are looking to recruit an experienced manager to head up and grow its new Skill Centres. Learning Curve Skill Centres were established to focus on NEET learners and engage them into vocational training and support them back into the workplace.

We have centres based in Middlesbrough, Bishop Auckland, Sunderland, Wakefield and Leeds providing a wide range of vocational programmes from construction to pre-uniformed services.

This is a very rewarding role for an ambitious manager with sound business acumen.

www.learning-curve.co.uk

The successful candidate must have a strong background in education and also have excellent budgeting and financial management skills. You will need to be self-motivated, organised and have excellent interpersonal skills. Successful candidates will have a proven track record of commercial business experience.

You will be results-oriented, naturally persuasive and have the ability to build on a range of successful, existing partnerships as well as developing new ones.

To apply for this post please send your C.V. With covering letter to Christine.Mason@learning-curve.co.uk by 3rd December 2012



GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

Full Time Learning Tutor in AAT/Business

Ref: G001

We are looking for an experienced and dynamic person with qualifications and expertise in the field of AAT and accountancy to join our new Curriculum team as we work together and build on the success of learners within the School of Business Enterprise and Computing.

Candidates must have AAT qualifications up to L4 and suitable industrial experience. Prior attainment of teaching qualifications is desirable however candidates wishing to commence a career in teaching will be considered alongside the commitment to undertake relevant teaching qualifications in an allotted timescale.

Salary negotiable dependant on qualifications and experience. Please contact Matt Bellamy for further details on this exciting post: bellamym@grimsby.ac.uk

Closing date: 28th November 2012

Interview date: 6th December 2012



Download an application form at: www.latestvacancies.com/grimsby

To advertise here contact
Chardelle Mason on 020 8123 4891



DOES YOUR AMBITION TO SUCCEED MATCH OURS?



Operations Director c£60k plus prp

Operations Director: Reporting to the Managing Director, Learning Curve Group (LCG)

A successful and ambitious FE leader, you will have proven experience of significant curriculum development and operations management across a diverse portfolio of Adult Skills budget funded programmes, spanning learner responsive and workbased provision. Your main role will be to provide the leadership to guide and support curriculum managers and their delivery teams to achieve funding and operational targets, often within very challenging timeframes.

Harnessing the talents of a strong and established delivery team means you will need to 'hit the ground running', so it is vital that you are fully conversant with the Adult Skills Budget funding methodology, and its impact on curriculum delivery and design. You will also need a thorough understanding of the audit and QA requirements associated with College subcontracting. Experience in the management of good quality blended/distance learning delivery would be advantageous.

You will lead on all external liaison with our College partners to monitor performance against agreed targets. As an experienced Senior Manager you will have the skills to build on these existing College relationships and identify new partnership opportunities, working closely with the Chief Executive and Managing Director.

Director of MIS & Funding c£45k plus prp

Director of MIS & Funding reporting to the Managing Director, Learning Curve (LC)

We are looking for a proven team manager and experienced MIS/Funding professional with excellent communication, organisational, problem solving, IT and analytical skills.

You will play a pivotal role in supporting our development by leading a small ambitious team that will deliver high quality learner data management across 16-18, adult learner and workbased funding streams.

You will need a detailed understanding of the individual learning Record (ILR), Learning aims Reference Application (LARA) and the Learner Information System (LIS). You will have detailed knowledge of SFA/EFA funding and audit regulations to ensure full compliance when reporting to regulatory bodies and subcontract partners. You should have experience of the data management and audit associated with our subcontracted provision via an extensive FE College partner network. As LC is also a lead contractor for 9 private training providers you will also lead on managing data where our directly funded provision is outsourced to subcontractors. The ability to work flexibly and accurately to tight timescales is essential.

Interested in working with Learning Curve?

If your ambition to succeed matches ours, we would like to hear from you

Please send your CV and covering letter to Christine.Mason@learning-curve.co.uk

Closing date for applications is 3rd December 2012

Should you wish to discuss these opportunities further please contact Christine Mason on 01388 741105 to arrange an informal discussion with our director

www.learning-curve.co.uk

Dynamic? Focused? Outstanding?...

If so, Peterborough Regional College may be the right place for you.

In December 2011 Ofsted said we are 'good with outstanding features' praising leadership and management and partnership working. We are now seeking three roles to add to our leadership team to meet our strategic objectives.

Vice Principal - Curriculum and Learner Experience

Salary up to £80,000 p.a.

Following the retirement of the current senior postholder, we are seeking a dynamic senior leader to work with us in becoming truly outstanding. This significant role will be responsible for continuing our ethos of continuous and sustainable improvement through creating a high performing curriculum offer for our learners. Ofsted stated "the aspiration of becoming an outstanding college is a realistic one" and we aim to achieve this through further raising standards of teaching and learning and making learner experience exceptional.

Assistant Principal Employer Engagement and

Apprenticeships

Salary up to £60,000 p.a.

This new role will report to the Vice Principal Resources and Business Innovation and become a member of the leadership team. We are seeking a focused and results driven leader to drive forward our employer responsive business. This vital role will be responsible for delivering the growth agenda for our apprenticeship provision and lead on all employer engagement activity. We aim to be the natural choice for employers for all their training needs.

Commercial and Enterprise Director

Salary £45,000 p.a.

This new role has responsibility for developing and managing the commercial operations within the College and supporting our recently launched Peter Jones Academy, which is part of our college-wide enterprise strategy. Working directly to the Vice Principal Resources and Business Innovation this role will help us meeting our targets for growth and further embedding our enterprise philosophy.

Benefits for the above positions include up to 45 days holiday per year pro rata (including bank holidays and Christmas closure), and access to a final salary pension scheme.

Closing date for all applications is Monday 26 November • We are an equal opportunities employer.

For further details and to apply online please visit our website: www.peterborough.ac.uk

This organisation is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of its learners and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



www.peterborough.ac.uk



Don't forget to check out our jobs board online at:

www.feweek.co.uk



Deputy Principal Curriculum Services and HE Salary up to £85,000

NESCOT is a successful college based in Epsom, Surrey which offers both Further and Higher Education courses. Our financial position, reputation, quality and curriculum are all strong. The college was inspected in September 2010; all areas were graded 'good' or 'outstanding'. The report highlighted a number of 'outstanding' areas including finance, capacity to improve, leadership and management.

Due to the retirement of our well respected Deputy, the college is seeking to appoint an inspirational, motivated and enthusiastic senior manager with the aspiration to become a Principal in the future.

This post is a key role which will lead on the strategies to move NESCOT to an 'Outstanding' college by 2015. You will have diverse responsibility for areas that service the curriculum and a key focus on further improving teaching, learning and assessment across the college. We are looking for an exceptional senior leader who will relish working in a demanding, success focused environment with a relentless approach to improve the quality of experience and achievement for our learners.

You will be already a highly effective senior manager with sound understanding of FE and HE curriculum and extensive knowledge of quality assurance for both. You should have proven experience of managing curriculum areas, measuring and bringing about improvements in quality assurance, teaching, learning and learner success.

To arrange an informal discussion please contact the Principal's Office on 0208 394 3001.

Closing date: Friday 23 November 2012 | Interviews will be held on: Wednesday 5th & Thursday 6th December 2012

For full details of the post, additional information on the College and details of how to make your application please visit www.nescot.ac.uk and follow the link for 'Working at Nescot'. If you experience any difficulties in accessing the site please contact the HR Department on 0208 394 3304.

Lsect



Learning & skills ~ events, consultancy and training

Finance Assistant £20-£25 DoE

We are seeking an enthusiastic and hardworking individual to assist in the day to day running of the accounts at Lsect.

The primary responsibilities of this role will be to maintain and update sales invoicing systems, ensuring accuracy of invoices issued and timely collection of receivables. You will also assist in the management of all aspects of credit control within Lsect, and the preparation of annual returns for taxation and accounting purposes.

Book-keeping experience and attention to detail is essential.

Apply by emailing your CV to jobs@feweek.co.uk by November 16



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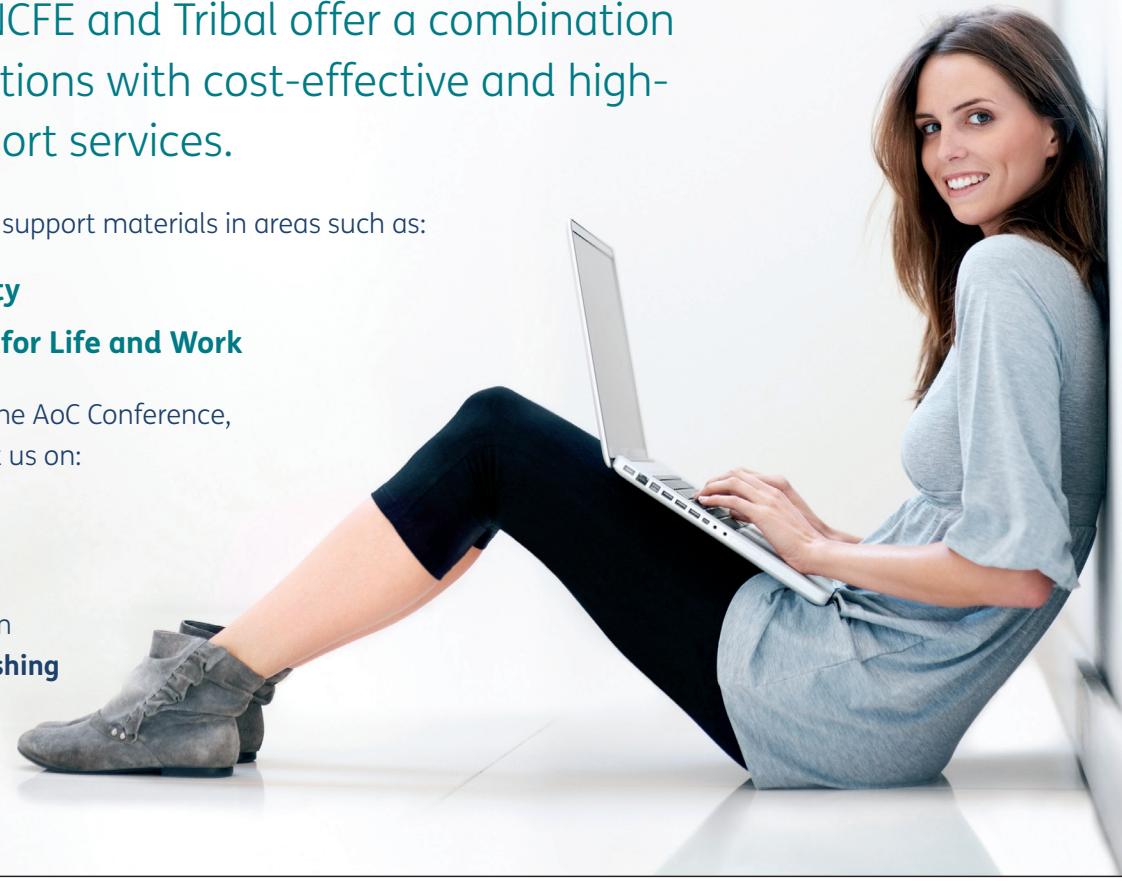
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FE Week Sudoku challenge

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| 4 | | | | 5 | 7 | | | |
| | | 8 | | | 9 | | 1 | 6 |
| 1 | | | | 6 | | | | |
| | | 2 | | | | | 5 | 7 |
| 3 | | | 1 | | | | 8 | |
| 8 | 5 | | | | 6 | | | |
| | | | 6 | | | | 9 | |
| 1 | 2 | | 5 | | 7 | | | |
| | | | 8 | 9 | | | | 5 |

**Difficulty:
EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

Last Week's solutions

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| 7 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 8 |
| 2 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| 4 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 7 |

**Difficulty:
EASY**

MEDIUM

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | | | 1 | 9 | 8 | | | |
| 1 | | | | 8 | 7 | 9 | 2 | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | |
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| 4 | | | 7 | 3 | | | | 9 |
| 3 | | | 4 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 | | | | | |
| | 3 | 4 | 8 | | | | | 6 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 9 |
| 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 |
| 3 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 8 |
| 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 4 |
| 4 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 |

**Difficulty:
MEDIUM**

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been enjoying my first bed"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford